PTSD 101

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a medically-diagnosed mental health condition that can develop after exposure to one or more traumatic events.

COMMON CAUSES

PTSD can develop after experiencing, witnessing or learning the details of a traumatic event.

- Threat of Injury or Death
  - Serious Accident
  - Combat
- Terrorist Attack
- Sexual Assault
- Physical Assault
- Natural Disaster
- Childhood Sexual or Physical Abuse

A diagnosis of PTSD requires the presence of symptoms from FOUR different categories.

1. INTRUSIONS
   Recurring distressing memories, dreams or flashbacks

2. AVOIDANCE
   Of people or places that remind them of the trauma

3. PERSISTENT NEGATIVE MOOD OR THOUGHTS
   Inability to recall the traumatic event or experience positive emotions; excessive blame, fear, shame, guilt; detachment from others

4. AROUSAL OR REACTIVITY
   Irritability, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, self-destructive behaviors

BY THE NUMBERS

Between 2000-2014, **149,000 active-duty service members** were diagnosed with PTSD in the Military Health System.

Of those, **122,000** were diagnosed following a deployment of 30 days or more.

PTSD is treatable. Effective treatments include:

EVIDENCE-BASED PSYCHOTHERAPIES OR COUNSELING

Trauma-focused cognitive therapies that include the following components

**Anxiety Management Techniques**
Involves learning and practicing techniques including meditation, progressive muscle relaxation or deep breathing exercises which lower anxiety or feelings of stress

**Cognitive Restructuring**
Involves identifying and changing troublesome thinking patterns and beliefs

**Exposure Therapy**
Involves thinking about or being in situations which trigger feelings of anxiety

MEDICATION INTERVENTIONS

**Antidepressant medications**
Strong research supports the use of the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors fluoxetine, paroxetine, or sertraline and the serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor venlafaxine as prescribed by your doctor

**Alpha-blocker medications**
Prazosin is approved for use as an adjunct to antidepressant medications to help reduce or control nightmares